

Processing Course Options Applications

Procedures for Preparing and Processing Course Options Applications

Section 118.52, Wis. Stats., creates Course Options. Under Course Options, a student who is enrolled in a public school district may attend up to two courses at a time at one or a combination of educational institutions.

1. COURSES OFFERED AT THE RESIDENT HIGH SCHOOL FOR COLLEGE CREDITS:

NOTE: For full-time open enrolled students, the *district of attendance* is considered the *resident district* for Course Options.

The following instructions provide information to assist parents, students, school districts, and educational institutions in implementing courses offered at the resident high school for college credits

Courses offered by a high school and only available to high school students, taught by either a high school teacher approved by the institution that will issue the college credit or by an instructor from that institution fall under the Course Options statute. Consequently, these courses and the opportunity to earn college credits for these courses must be provided at no cost to students. The process for students to apply for Course Options and the corresponding college credits for these courses will be determined by the resident district working with the institution of higher education (IHE). Students and parents should check with a school counselor, the course instructor, or another district designated person for the process of applying for Course Options and the corresponding college credits for these courses.

The cost for offering the course will be based on a negotiated agreement between the resident school district and the IHE.

- For courses taught by a resident district teacher, the expectation is that the agreement will be cost-neutral for both parties. The resident school district and IHE may negotiate a fee to be paid by the resident school district that covers any additional costs directly attributed to Course Options. Students and families shall not be required to pay any costs for the course.
- For courses taught by an instructor from the IHE, the resident school district and IHE may negotiate a fee to be paid by the resident school district that covers any additional costs directly attributed to Course Options. Students and families shall not be required to pay any costs for the course.

2. PREPARING AND SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS:

NOTE: For full-time open enrolled students, the *district of attendance* is considered the *resident district* for Course Options.

The following instructions are for the parent or student who is submitting a Course Options application to an Educational Institution. *For Course Options courses offered by the student's resident school district, see number 1 above.*

- The parent/student must complete all required sections of the application (PI-8900) and must sign the form.
- If any information is missing or unclear, it may delay the processing of the application while the educational institution attempts to obtain or clarify all of the necessary information.
- The application must specify the course that the student wishes to attend and may specify the school or schools at which the student wishes to attend the course.
- A student may take up to two courses at any one time under Course Options. If the courses are taken at different educational institutions, a separate form must be filled out and submitted to each educational institution.
- The parent/student must submit the application (PI-8900) to the educational institution or institutions no later than 6 weeks before the scheduled start of the course. It is the responsibility of the parent/student to obtain from the educational institution the date on which the course will begin.
- Late applications will be returned to the parents/students indicating the required application date and explaining the reason for the return.
- Ineligible applications will also be returned to the parents/student citing the reason for ineligibility. This could include students who are not currently enrolled in a Wisconsin public school or who do not meet the course or educational institution entrance requirements.
- The educational institution will inform the parent/student and the resident school district if the requested course has been approved or denied no later than one week prior to the date on which the course is scheduled to commence. The parent/student must notify the educational institution no later than the last weekday (excluding state holidays) before the course begins whether or not the student will attend the course.
- A student's parent may appeal the decision of an Educational Institution or a school board to the Department of Public Instruction within 30 days of the decision. The Department shall affirm the decision unless it is found to be arbitrary or unreasonable. The Department's decision is final.

Common questions:

1. May students who are enrolled in private schools or home-based private education programs apply to take a course or courses under Course Options?

No. The Course Options statute requires that the student be enrolled in a public school district. Separate statute allows: 1) private school students to take up to two high school courses per semester in the students' resident school district, and 2) students enrolled in home-based education programs to take up to two courses in any grade in either the resident or a non-resident school district.

2. Do all courses have to be taken at the same educational institution?

No. The student may take one course from one educational institution and another course from a different educational institution as long as no more than two courses are taken at the same time. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that her or his schedule can accommodate such an arrangement. Educational institutions are not required to make any accommodations to enable the student to do this.

3. How does a student find out when the course is scheduled to begin and what the prerequisites for the course are?

It is the responsibility of the student to obtain this information from the educational institution.

4. How many courses may be taken in a year?

A student is permitted to take two courses at a time. The number of courses a student could take in a year will depend on the length of the courses taken.

5. Can a student take two courses from one educational institution and another two courses from another educational institution at the same time?

No. No more than two courses may be taken at any time under Course Options.

3. PROCESSING APPLICATIONS – EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS:

NOTE: For full-time open enrolled students, the *district of attendance* is considered the *resident district* for Course Options.

The following instructions are for an Educational Institution to which a student submits a Course Options application. This includes a public school district in which a student is not currently enrolled full time. *For Course Options courses offered by the student's resident school district, see number 1 above.*

- The educational institution should document the date on which the application form was received.
- The educational institution must send a copy of the application form to the student's resident school district and should try to do so within three (3) working days of receiving the application form. *The educational institution should NOT send a copy of the form to the Department of Public Instruction.*
- As soon as possible after receiving the application, the educational institution should provide to the student's resident school district an estimate of the cost of the course, calculated as follows:
 1. For a public school in a nonresident district, a charter school, or a nonprofit organization, the cost the resident district will pay to the institution will be the cost of course or 1/7 of full-time open enrollment amount per credit taken, whichever is less. (50% of 1/7 amount for one-half credit course).
 2. For the UW System, a technical college, a nonprofit institution of higher education, or a tribal college, the cost the resident district will pay to the institution will be 50% of the tuition the IHE charges for the course, not to exceed 50% of UW-Madison tuition for a course with the same number of credits, plus any fees and/or book costs.
- It is recommended that the educational institution retain the original of the application form and make copies for the various notifications.

- If the educational institution has a process for applying to and enrolling in the institution, the institution needs to:
 - Provide the applicant with forms and materials needed or the corresponding website for applying to and registering at the institution.
 - If needed to determine eligibility to enroll, the educational institution may request from the resident school district any student records that are necessary to determine whether the student meets the entrance criteria.
 - If needed to determine eligibility to enroll, the educational institution may request a copy of any expulsion findings and orders pertaining to the student, a copy of records of any pending disciplinary proceeding and the length of the term of the expulsion or the possible outcomes of the pending disciplinary proceeding.
 - Upon receiving the student's institution application and registration materials and any requested materials from the student's resident district, determine if the student meets the entrance criteria. The educational institution must use the same criteria for determining enrollment eligibility as that used for non-Course Options students.
- If there are prerequisites or other criteria for entrance into the requested course(s), the educational institution needs to:
 - Notify the applicant of the prerequisites and/or criteria for the requested course(s) and request any materials the applicant can provide to document that the applicant meets the prerequisites and/or criteria.
 - If needed, the educational institution may request from the resident school district any student records that are necessary to determine whether the student meets the prerequisites or other enrollment criteria for the requested course(s).
 - Upon receiving the requested student and resident district materials, determine if the student meets the prerequisites or other enrollment criteria for the requested course(s). The educational institution must use the same criteria for determining course eligibility as that used for non-Course Options students.
- Determine if there is or likely will be space available for Course Options students in each requested course. If spaces are available for Course Options students after all qualified non-Course Options students have been enrolled, but the educational institution receives more applications than there are spaces available in the course, the educational institution must use a random method to determine which students to accept.
- No later than one week prior to the date on which the course is scheduled to commence, the educational institution must notify the applicant and the resident school board, in writing, whether or not the application has been accepted.
 - If the application is accepted, the educational institution must inform the applicant of the school at which the student may attend the course.
 - If the application is accepted, the acceptance applies only for the following semester, school year, or other session in which the course is offered.
 - If the educational institution rejects an application, it must include in the notice the reason for the rejection.

- The educational institution must make an effort to ensure that the parent/student receives the notice no later than one week before the course is scheduled to begin. If the notice is postmarked at least 3 days before the date on which the parent is required to receive the notice, it will be considered timely notification.

Common questions:

1. May an educational institution deny a student based on the student's grades or other academic criteria?

Yes, but only if those same criteria apply to non-Course Options students who wish to take the course.

2. May an educational institution deny a student based on the student not having taken certain courses prior to taking the course?

Yes, but only if those same criteria apply to non-Course Options students who wish to take the course.

3. May an educational institution district deny a student for disciplinary reasons?

Yes, but only if those same criteria apply to non-Course Options students who wish to take the course.

4. What records may an educational institution request from a resident school district?

The educational institution may request those records or transcripts that are necessary to determine whether the student meets the educational institution's established criteria for admittance and enrollment in the institution or admittance to a requested course. The educational institution may also request records relating to an expulsion or pending disciplinary proceedings.

4. PROCESSING APPLICATIONS – RESIDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT:

NOTE: For full-time open enrolled students, the *district of attendance* is considered the *resident district* for Course Options.

The following instructions are for the resident school district from which a student submits a Course Options application to an Educational Institution. *For Course Options courses offered by the student's resident school district, see number 1 above.*

- Upon receiving copies of Course Options application forms from an educational institution, the resident school district must act on the applications in accordance with school board policies and procedures.
- Upon request of an educational institution, the resident school district* must promptly provide the following records:
 - Records or transcripts that are necessary to determine whether the student meets the educational institution's established criteria for admittance to and enrollment in the institution.
 - Records or transcripts that are necessary to determine whether the student meets the educational institution's established criteria for admittance to and enrollment in the requested course.
 - Records relating to an expulsion or pending disciplinary proceedings that may lead to expulsion.

- No later than one week prior to the date on which the course is scheduled to commence, the resident school board must notify the applicant and the educational institution, in writing, if the application has been denied.
 - The resident school board must include in the notice the reason for the rejection.
 - If the notice is postmarked at least three (3) days before the date on which the parent is required to receive the notice, it will be considered timely notification.
- The resident school district must reject an application if it determines that the course conflicts with the applicant's individualized education program (IEP).
- The resident school district may reject an application if it determines that:
 - the course does not satisfy a high school graduation requirement under § 118.33.
 - the course does not conform to or support the student's academic and career plan under § 115.28 (59) (a) if any.

Common questions:

1. May a resident school district deny a student's attendance under Course Options if the resident school district offers a comparable course?

No. There are no comparability provisions under Course Options.

2. May a student participate in both Course Options and Youth Options at the same time?

Yes, as long as the student meets the requirements for each.

5. TRANSPORTATION:

- The parent of a student attending a course under Course Options is responsible for transporting the student to and from the course.
- Parents may apply for reimbursement of the transportation costs if the student and parent are unable to pay these costs. The DPI will determine the reimbursement amount and must give preference to students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch under 42 USC 1758 (b).
- A claim for transportation reimbursement must be submitted to the DPI no later than July 15 for courses attended during the previous school year.
- The transportation reimbursement claim form is available from DPI on this webpage - <http://courseoptions.dpi.wi.gov/>

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For Additional Information or Questions Contact:

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